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LINGUAPRAGMATIC CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN CONFLICT REPRESENTATION
IN CHINESE MEDIA[1]

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Abstract. The study is devoted to the linguapragmatic characteristics of the special military operation representation in the media discourse of the People's Republic of China. The material of 230 media texts from the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China, People's Daily Newspaper, and 150 publications from the entertainment social network Zhihu was analysed. The research method proposed was a critical content analysis conducted by means of a concordancer programme with keyword extraction and thematic segmentation. The study revealed differences in the use of linguistic means of forming the image of Russia and identified the linguapragmatic features of the studied media texts, which consist in the emphasis on the historical and social-and-political context of the foreign policy events description. At the same time, social media texts paid more attention to the history of relations between Russia and Ukraine, while the official media described the political and economic consequences of the military conflict. The study shows the applicability of content analysis to identifying the linguapragmatics that characterises the image of the country by analysing the linguistic representation of social-and-political events and state institutions in media texts. Further research should be done to investigate the image of Russian institutions in the Chinese media in order to identify the formation of the image of Russia in the Chinese media.

Key words: media discourse, Chinese media, content analysis, corpus of media texts, representation in the media.

ЛИНГВОПРАГМАТИЧЕСКИЕ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКИ
РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИИ РОССИЙСКО-УКРАИНСКОГО КОНФЛИКТА
В МЕДИАДИСКУРСЕ КНР[1]

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена исследованию лингвопрагматических характеристик репрезентации специальной военной операции в медиадискурсе КНР. В сопоставительном ключе проанализировано 230 медиатекстов из официальной газеты Коммунистической партии Китая «Женьминь Жибао» и 150 публикаций из социальной информационно-развлекательной сети «Чжиху». В качестве метода исследования предложен качественно-количественный контент-анализ, проводимый посредством программы-конкордансера с выделением и тематической сегментацией ключевых слов. В результате исследования были обнаружены отличия в использовании лингвистических средств формирования образа России и определены лингвопрагматические особенности рассмотренных медиатекстов, которые состоят в акценте на историческом и социально-политическом контексте событий. При этом в текстах социальных медиа больше внимания уделялось истории отношений России и Украины, тогда как официальные СМИ описывали политические и экономические последствия военного конфликта. Проведенное исследование показывает применимость контент-анализа для выявления лингвопрагматических характеристик образа страны посредством анализа языковой репрезентации общественно-политических событий и институтов в медиатекстах. Данная работа может быть продолжена в направлении изучения образа институтов России в китайских СМИ с целью установления особенностей формировании образа нашей страны в КНР.

Ключевые слова: медиадискурс, китайские СМИ, контент-анализ, корпус медиатекстов, репрезентация в СМИ.

Introduction

Media communication in the modern era is characterised by its mass and permanent nature, as information appearing in the media is instantly conveyed to the recipient of the speech message. Information flows are much like a tsunami, where every person is essentially always in the 'coastal zone,' with no way to escape the impact or consequences of the information wave [Kalinin, Mavleeva, 2022, p. 136]. Karabulatova and Kopnina, describing modern media communication also call for the need to comprehend those mechanisms that not only characterise the creative attitude to a speech work, but can also serve the purpose of deliberate distortion of factual data, historical memory, and destruction of personal values [Karabulatova, Kopnina, 2023, p. 319].

The contemporary media space is a crucial channel for shaping public opinion about any event, personality, social or governmental institution. Essentially, any socio-political event, through media coverage, reaches the mass audience as a linguistic representation of a new concept or a change in the content of an existing concept. This concept, when combined with the mental attitudes of each individual recipient, i.e., their basic knowledge and set of personal experiences, is conceptualized, categorized, and interpreted [Kalinin, 2022, p. 42].

In this context, the study of verbal representation of various socio-political phenomena holds significant predictive potential, as it allows of predictions about the further development of the political situation based on understanding the mechanisms of public opinion formation at the text level. This influences relations between countries and, in some cases, the geopolitical balance in the world. The language of mass communication is a key tool for informational influence on both individuals and collective audiences. Serving as the primary means of creating a socio-political worldview and a fundamental mechanism for reflecting and shaping the national worldview, language units are to be considered the most objective implement of linguistic analysis.

The relevance of this research is confirmed by the fact that today we are already witnessing a hybrid war, where the linguistic component may play a more important role than the military actions. In the context of a special military operation, Russia has faced a large-scale information campaign aimed at dehumanizing the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and demonizing Russia as a whole in Western media [Velikaya, Berezkina, 2023; Zinin, 2023; Vyunov et al., 2024; Kazarenko, 2023]. This raises the pressing issue of the event representation in Ukraine within the media space of the Global

South countries, particularly in China, with which Russia officially maintains a comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction entering a new era. It is worth noting that in the Russia's public media space, there is often a postulated opinion of comprehensive support from China, which seems not entirely justified, as it reflects private interpretations by Russian journalists of individual statements by Chinese political figures and lacks an analysis of public opinion.

In this regard, the subject of this study is the linguapragmatic characteristics of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict representation in institutional (the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China) and non-institutional (the social network Zhihu) media in China. The aim of the study is to identify these characteristics and subsequently interpret them in the context of forming the image of Russia as a whole.

The comparative analysis of official media and social networks, which technically underpins this study, opens the way to an urgent interdisciplinary scientific task with practical implications, namely, testing a mechanism for monitoring the formation and change of public opinion.

As noted in one contemporary research, modern media text has "a complex communicative structure, combining text, hypertext, dynamic (static) images, and sound, providing a nonlinear, multichannel, multilayered, and multifaceted perception of embedded conceptual and stylistic meanings" [Akhrenova, Zaripov, 2023, p. 92]. Meanwhile, the verbal component remains the central element capable of conveying the main content of the author's intention and reflecting the extralinguistic characteristics of media texts.

It is also important to note the significance of the lingua-cultural context of modern media communication, within which the specifics of discourse generation and its potential interpretation by media text recipients are determined by lingua-culture [Shi-Xu, 2022]. This necessitates considering the features of national Chinese culture within this study.

Chinese-language media discourse is a frequent subject of linguistic research, and the very principle of representing a country's media image is closely linked to the conceptual space of Eastern and Western propaganda [Karabulatova, Lagutkina, 2021, p. 40]. In general, the features of the China's official media functioning [Lobanova, 2014], the use

of media discourse to express the official position of China's leadership [Koshkarova, Mikushev, 2021], are often studied in Russian linguistics.

Undoubtedly, the role of Chinese unofficial media, such as various social networks, in political communication in general [Yu Xiao, 2021] and as a means of soft power in particular [Podosokorskiy, 2022], has also been studied. It should be noted that a systematic analysis of non-institutional political media discourse in China is presented in Frolova's dissertation research, where it is described as a hybrid format of media and political discourses formed in an electronically mediated environment, providing status equality of communicants and transmitting the axiological attitudes of agents of electronically mediated communication [Frolova, 2023, p. 6].

The special military operation as a subject of description in Chinese media is presented in several works. It should be noted that some researchers confirm the official position of comprehensive support by China for Russia's actions through their scientific inquiries. For instance, Shemyakin asserts that in most cases, the sentiment in the media towards Russia is friendly. Russia is portrayed as a powerful strategic, military, and economically strong country, and its people are depicted as indomitable and preserving their cultural shortcomings. It is also often emphasized that both Russia and China jointly oppose the USA and NATO [Shemyakin, 2023, p. 348]. Xu Mingluo confirms the friendly rhetoric of Chinese official media, explaining it as a direct instruction from Chinese authorities to limit the coverage of the special military operation within efforts to strengthen peace and support Russia's right to defend its interests [Xu Mingluo, 2022, p. 214]. In the works of Kalinin and Mavleeva, based on conducted corpus content analysis and substantive discourse analysis, a more restrained assessment is given: in the media discourse of China, there is rather an absence of an effort to form an evaluative component of conceptual knowledge about the situation in Ukraine. Meanwhile, we see that significant attention is paid to the historical context of Russia-Ukraine relations and the external socio-economic background [Kalinin, Mavleeva, 2022, p. 143]. It should be emphasized that studies of Chinese social networks to identify the state of public opinion regarding the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and linguapragmatic analysis of Russia's image have not been conducted, making

this comparative study particularly relevant from a practical standpoint.

Materials and methods

The comparative nature of the study involves the compilation of two corpuses of media texts. The sources for these texts were analytical and informational articles from the official website of the People's Daily Newspaper (人民日报), the official periodical of the Communist Party of China, and posts from the social network Zhihu (知乎), which is similar to Quora or Yandex.Zen, featuring informational and entertainment content. In both cases, the selection of texts was conducted from February 2022 to December 2022. The institutional media corpus consisted of 230 media texts, totaling 122,461 characters, while the volume of the non-institutional media corpus comprised 150 publications, totaling 149,178 characters.

The methodology for analysing media representation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is primarily based on corpus-based critical content analysis, which includes three stages:

1. Quantitative Analysis – utilizing software to create a list of keywords and their collocations;

2. Qualitative Analysis – grouping keywords into thematic blocks and identifying patterns in the use of keywords and collocations;

3. Critical Analysis – examining specific contexts to refine the data obtained in the first two stages.

The content analysis was conducted with the concordance software AntConc (version 3.5.8), which will make an in-depth study of textual information bulk possible and help considering specificity of lexical elements and their combinations.

This methodological approach is an effective tool for identifying the linguapragmatic characteristics of the image of a public institution in the media discourse of another country. The use of a text corpus enables the analysis of big data, thematic grouping and qualitative analysis point to conclusions obtained from quantitative analysis, adding the necessary detail to the results.

Results and discussion

The analysis of keywords identified lists of pragmatically significant keywords and phrases, whose frequent use contributes to the formation of a specific conceptual representation of Russia's

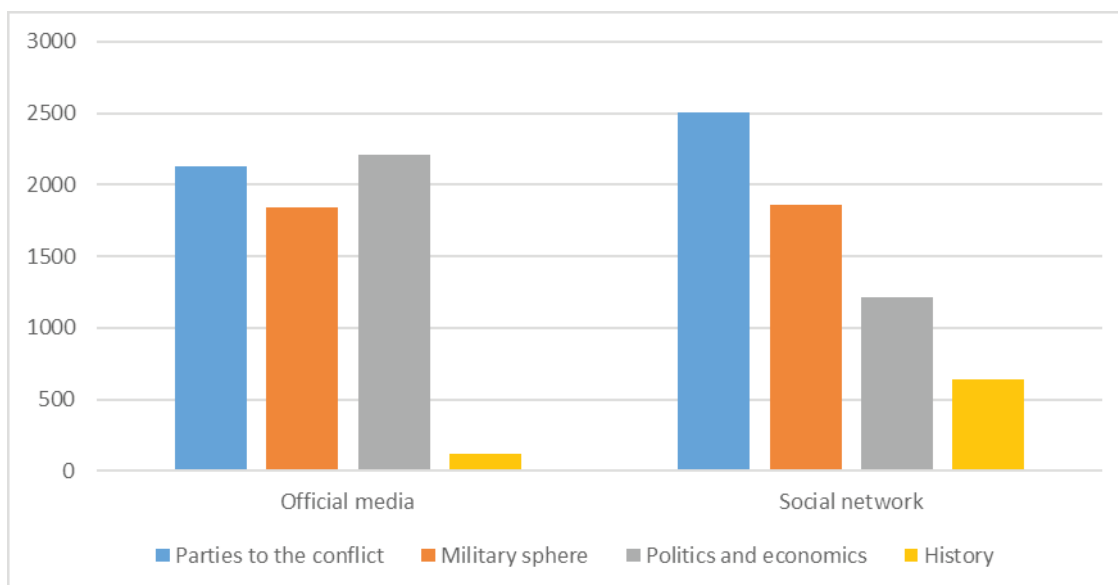actions in Ukraine within the framework of the special military operation.

The obtained lexemes were divided into four thematic groups with the most frequent keywords for all four groups of each corpus that are presented in the form of word clouds (see Table 1).

The use of thematic lexical units by groups in the collected corpuses is represented in following Figure. The columns on the left represent the frequency of lexeme usage from four thematic groups in official media texts, while the columns on the right correspond to their frequency in the social media corpus. Columns of the same color indicate the same thematic group across different corpora.

A comparative analysis of the numerical data provides sufficient information about the core components of the description of the special military operation in Ukraine in Chinese news texts. The conducted analysis pointed to the obvious difference in the frequency of lexemes describing the historical context of the conflict in Ukraine. The authors of the texts published on social media significantly focus more on the historical causes of the conflict, especially the Soviet period of history, as is evidenced by the frequent use of lexemes 苏联 "USSR" – 321, 历史 "history" – 87, 克里米亚 "Crimea" – 84, 罗斯 "Ancient Russia" – 49. The almost twofold difference in the frequency of the thematic word groups that reflect the political-and-economic context of the special military operation can be observed in the two corpuses: lexemes belonging to the "Politics and Economy" thematic group were used 2211 times in official media texts and 1210 times in unofficial media texts. Official media pay significantly more attention to the political and economic events that are unfolded as a consequence of the Ukrainian conflict, describing sanctions, countless political events, economic consequences, as indicated by the frequent use of corresponding lexemes: 制裁 "sanctions" – 96, 支持 "support" – 92, 粮食 "food" – 87, 和平 "peace" – 77, 援助 "aid (material)" – 65, 政治 "politics" – 65, 对话 "dialogue" – 61, 协议 "agreements" – 58. The great attention to the essence of the conflict and its historical context, with a decrease in the coverage of the political-and-economic sphere, also reflects the basic feature of the Chinese blogosphere as a whole, namely its strict centralization and regulation: in unofficial media, authors usually try to avoid political issues, leaving the decisive word in covering this sphere to official state sources.

Table 1. **Thematic groups with the most frequent keywords**

Group	Institutional Media corpus	Non-Institutional Media corpus
1. Conflicting parties (countries, international organizations, politicians)	Turkey France Europe UN Istanbul USA Kyiv Poland Germany NATO Belarus England West China European Union Moscow	West Moscow European Union UN USA Japan Poland Kyiv NATO Belarus Europe England France China Government of Ukraine Germany
2. Military sphere (Russian and Ukrainian settlements, weaponry, military vocabulary directly reflecting combat actions)	conflict strike weapon biological laboratory army of Russia unit special military operation war guided missile Odessa question/problem armed military army of Ukraine confronta expansion to the East security Donbass invasion strategy crisis danger	confrontation tank military start a war danger split army war conflict weapon expansion to the East crisis army of Russia unit nazis East of Ukraine question/problem strike special military operation security control attack army of Ukraine strategy invasion biological laboratory conduct hostilities offensive
3. Politics and economy (political-and-economic aspect of the special military operation)	assist peace Kuleba Macron support sovereignty conference agreement interests port Putin food allies struggle for Prime Minister Biden Lavrov humanism territorial integrity Zelinsky Scholz Peskov dialog 100 million dollars coherence negotiation stability politics sanctions economics defend Beijing sign (the document) aid position summit natural gas (material) export cooperation requirements	politics interests sovereignty aid sanctions (material) Zelinsky relationship President Putin position recognize economics independence support government cooperation
4. History (historical context)	Crimea Afghanistan Normandy Format Taiwan World War II Cold War USSR	Cold War Afghanistan World War II USSR Taiwan Crimea Rus

Distribution of keywords by thematic groups

Further analysis revealed specific manifestations of the representation of the special military operation in the media discourse of China. First of all, it is impossible not to pay attention to the nomination of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict (Table 2).

We can notice some difference in the frequent nominations of the special military operation. In the corpus of official media, the nominations 危机 "crisis" and 冲突 "conflict" are predominant, with frequencies of 145 and 110. At the same time, in the social media corpus, the nominations 战争 "war" and 入侵/侵略 "invasion/aggression" dominate, with frequencies of 248 and 156. This reflects differences in rhetoric and emphasis between official media and social networks. In particular, in unofficial media, lexemes with a negative connotation such as "invasion" and "annex" are encountered, creating a negative image of "a large state that unlawfully attacked a small, weak neighbor"[2]:

(1) 我支持乌克兰反对俄罗斯**入侵**，侵占邻国土地。(知乎/Zhihu) – I support Ukraine in opposing the **invasion** and occupation of state territories by Russia;

(2) 所谓阻止北约东扩是纯粹的谎言，靠**吞并弱小邻国**阻止强敌是什么行为？(知乎/Zhihu) – What kind of behavior is it to restrain a strong enemy by **annexing a weak neighbor**?

Note the lexeme 吞并 "annexation" is formed through copulative compounding, which involves combining two semantic roots that are homogeneous in nature, meaning that each character contributes to the overall meaning of the word. 吞并 ("annexation") consists of 吞 "to swallow" and 并 "to unite", reflecting a high potential for forming a negative assessment.

The use of the word denoting "war" to name the special military operation is also more frequent in social media corpus , whereas official media are significantly more neutral and most often use the phrase 乌俄冲突 – "Russian-Ukrainian

Table 2. **Nomination of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict (the frequency of word usage)**

Keyword	Official media	Social network
危机 "crisis"	145	31
冲突 "conflict"	110	51
特别军事行动 "special military operation"	84	23
战争 "war"	79	248
入侵/侵略 "invasion/aggression"	67	156
吞并 "annex"	0	25

conflict". The significantly negative nature of the coverage of Russia's actions in the context of the special military operation on social media can be confirmed by specific examples:

(3) **战争爆发**后，俄罗斯策划赫尔松等地入俄可以看出。(知乎/Zhihu) – After the **war broke out**, it became clear that Russia plans to annex Kherson and other territories;

(4) 俄罗斯陷入**战争泥潭**，财政困难，国内厌战情绪高涨。(知乎/Zhihu) – Russia is bogged down in the **quagmire of war**, facing financial difficulties, and anti-war sentiments are rising within the country.

The examples above show that outside official media, Russia is portrayed as an "aggressor that invaded the territory of a neighboring state and annexed its territories for unclear purposes." Noteworthy is the metaphorical model WAR IS A QUAGMIRE, an ontological metaphor of high intensity, which through reframing the conceptual characteristics of military actions emphasizes their assessment by the author as "protracted and unproductive." As is known, metaphors are an effective means of speech influence, it is described by various researchers as a tool for forming the author's opinion [Kalinin, Ignatenko, 2022] and media image at the conceptual level [Brugman, Burgers, Vis, 2019].

It should be noted that not all studied publications present the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in such a negative light; however, unlike official media, where events are represented in a deliberately neutral style, manifestations of negativization are quite frequent. Thus, in 112 out of 150 reviewed texts of non-institutional media discourse, elements of negative assessment of the special military operation, its methods, causes, or consequences were identified.

From a pragmatic perspective, the difference in the use of individual lexical units within the thematic group "history" is highly significant, as it highlights distinctions in the representation of the historical context when describing the special military operation in the texts of official media and social networks. The context of any political event is essential for the Chinese audience, whose cultural peculiarity lies in its orientation toward the past and the search for the causes of present events in history (see Table 3).

In the corpus of official media, the term 台湾 "Taiwan" is mentioned more frequently (48 occurrences) compared to social networks (26 occurrences), highlighting its prominence in the official discourse. Similarly, 诺曼底模式 "Normandy Format" appears exclusively in official media (22 occurrences), emphasizing the diplomatic focus of these texts. In contrast, the social media corpus demonstrates a stronger emphasis on historical and ideological references, with significantly higher mentions of 苏联 "USSR" (321 occurrences compared to 9 in official media) and 历史 "History" (87 occurrences compared to 17). Lexemes such as 克里米亚 "Crimea", 二战 "World War II", and 罗斯 "Rus" are also more prevalent in social media, indicating a preference for framing the context of the special military operation within a broader historical narrative. Interestingly, the term 冷战 "Cold War" shows similar frequencies in both corpora (30 in official media and 33 in social networks), suggesting that it is a shared framework for interpreting contemporary events. These differences reflect the distinct priorities of the two corpora: official media focus on current diplomatic and geopolitical issues, while social networks emphasize historical and ideological dimensions.

Table 3. **Historical context of the special military operation (the frequency of word usage)**

Keyword	Official media	Social network
台湾 "Taiwan"	48	26
冷战 "Cold War"	30	33
诺曼底模式 "Normandy Format"	22	0
历史 "History"	17	87
苏联 "USSR"	9	321
阿富汗 "Afghanistan"	9	30
克里米亚 "Crimea"	7	84
二战 "World War II"	1	39
罗斯 "Rus"	0	49

The following examples from Chinese blogs show the specifics of covering the historical context of the special military operation:

(5) 苏联解体后，失去了乌克兰的俄罗斯，绝无再成为世界超级强国的可能，因为乌克兰之于俄罗斯，相当于东北三省（粮食基地） + 江浙沪（经济中心）+长安洛阳（文明故地），很难想象丢掉了密西西比河流域的美国和丢掉了江浙沪的中国，国力会衰退到什么程度。(知乎/Zhihu) – After **the collapse of the USSR**, Russia, which lost Ukraine, no longer had the opportunity to become a world superpower, because Ukraine for Russia **is equivalent** to the three northeastern provinces (food base) + the 'Shanghai region' of China (economic center) + Chang'an and Luoyang (cradle of civilization). It is hard to imagine how the national power of the USA would decline if they lost the Mississippi River basin, and China, which lost the Shanghai region.

In this sentence, the author explains the strategically important significance of Ukraine for Russia both historically and socio-economically. Such an example of persuasive influence is based on national-cultural analogies and symbols understandable to the Chinese linguistic culture, capable of exerting linguistic-and-pragmatic influence simultaneously on rational and emotional spheres, confirming the necessity of considering cultural context when analysing national discourses [Shi-Xu, 2022].

(6) 因为俄罗斯乌克兰同文同种，在苏联解体之前，乌克兰跟俄罗斯应该是一家人，显然，俄罗斯是想帮助乌克兰，发挥"同文同种"的优势，所以乌克兰本就应该理解俄罗斯的好意，并入俄罗斯。(知乎/Zhihu) – Since Russia and Ukraine are brotherly peoples and have a common language, before **the collapse of the USSR**, they were one family. Obviously, Russia wants to help Ukraine, using the advantages of "common language and brotherly people," so Ukraine should have understood Russia's goodwill and joined it.

In this sentence, where a positive representation of Russia's image is, we observe a comparison of Russia-Ukraine relations with family ties, focusing the Chinese audience to the "legitimacy of Russia's actions to protect the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine," which reflects the author's intention to positively evaluated Russia's actions.

A detailed study of the quantitative distribution of lexical units reflecting the parties to the conflict demonstrates which political entities appear as direct and indirect participants in the conflict (Table 4).

The most obvious pattern is the high frequency of the lexeme *USA*, with almost identical values for the two corpus, indicating that

Table 4. **Conflict actors (the frequency of word usage)**

Keyword	Official media	Social network
美国 "USA"	685	625
北约 "NATO"	356	259
中国 "China"	155	462
欧洲 "Europe"	130	147
欧盟 "EU"	114	166
西方 "West"	114	234
基辅 "Kiev"	95	95
联合国 "UN"	90	34
土耳其 "Turkey"	88	4
德国 "Germany"	57	57
波兰 "Poland"	53	50
法国 "France"	50	34
白俄罗斯 "Belarus"	41	47
伊斯坦布尔 "Istanbul"	36	0
英国 "England"	33	42
莫斯科 "Moscow"	31	42

in Chinese media, the USA is recognized as a de facto party to the conflict. Interestingly, the West is more frequently mentioned in social media, whereas *NATO* is more often mentioned in official media, reflecting the formal and informal nature of information representation. Additionally, note the higher frequency of the lexeme *China* in the texts of the non-institutional corpus, likely reflecting a greater interest in internal matters, characteristic of Chinese linguistic culture in general.

Let's consider specific examples:

(7) 美国在乌克兰长期策划推动反俄运动，加剧了民族主义，并不断破坏所有谈判解决乌克兰问题的尝试。（人民日报/ People's Daily Newspaper) – The USA has long organized and promoted an anti-Russian campaign in Ukraine, fueled nationalism, and constantly undermined all attempts to resolve the Ukrainian issue through negotiations.

In this example from official media, we see a direct accusation of the USA in further fueling the war, encouraging nationalist movements, and hindering peace. Obviously, such negativization of the USA's role in international relations is part of China's media strategy to strengthen its own image.

(8) 王毅说，中国作为安理会常任理事国和负责任大国，始终忠实履行自身国际义务，为维护世界和平稳定发挥建设性作用。（人民日报/People's Daily Newspaper) – Wang Yi stated that as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a responsible country, China has always faithfully fulfilled its international obligations and played a constructive role in maintaining world peace and stability.

This example confirms the previous one, namely that within official media, China forms an image of a peacekeeping country for its internal and external audience, actively contrasting itself with Western countries supporting active hostilities, as confirmed by clichéd phrases like *always faithfully fulfill its international obligations, play a constructive role in maintaining world peace and stability*, and others.

Unofficial media offer a more simplified logic of presentation, pursuing practically the same goal – demonstrating the inefficiency of the existing foreign policy arrangement, achieved, for example, through criticism of the UN:

(9) 联合国为什么不支持乌东四州呢？(知乎/Zhihu) – Why doesn't the UN support the four regions of Eastern Ukraine (referring to LPR, DPR, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions)?

(10) 联合国一直这么对美方毕恭毕敬。(知乎/Zhihu) – The UN constantly treats the USA with obsequious respect.

It is also noteworthy that the Chinese traditionally positively evaluate the personality of the President of the Russian Federation, V.V. Putin:

(11) 优势在我，希望中国人民的老朋友普京先生再接再厉，继续帮我们赢得战略空间。(知乎/Zhihu) – I hope that the old friend of the Chinese people, Mr. Putin, will redouble his efforts and continue to help us gain strategic space.

We emphasize separately that publications negatively portraying or even demonizing the image of the President of Russia were not identified in either official media or social networks. At the same time, with neutral mentions of the personality of the President of Ukraine, V. Zelensky, in official media, we noticed a decrease in the frequency of his mention in unofficial media and the use of derogatory rhetoric:

(12) 发现泽连斯基这小子孺子可教了，于是拜登登高一呼，拉了一帮祖宗八代的世交兄弟，有钱出钱，有家伙出家伙。(知乎/Zhihu) – Noticing that Zelensky is a promising boy, Biden gathered a gang of brothers who have been friends for generations and initiated that those who have money and weapons should give them.

Conclusions

The conducted corpus content analysis, based on the quantitative counting of keywords followed by thematic segmentation and linguacultural interpretation, as well as a refining critical comparative analysis of individual sentences and texts, has confirmed its applicability as a tool for identifying the linguapragmatic characteristics of a socio-political object. The results of the study demonstrate the specificity of representing Russia's image in the context of the description of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Chinese media through the use of certain linguistic means. The choice of sources for the material under analysis, including both official media, the online version of the CPC newspaper People's Daily, and the social network Zhihu, enables

a more objective study of the linguapragmatic characteristics of the Russia's image within institutional and non-institutional discourses in the Chinese language in a comparative manner.

As a result of the content analysis of news and analytical publications, specific conclusions were drawn about how the image of Russia is formed in Chinese media in the context of informing the public about the course of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict (Table 5). The findings presented in the table reflect the results of a linguistic-pragmatic analysis, which examines how lexical units or phrases are used to convey specific communicative intentions or rhetorical goals in a given context. These characteristics are evident through evaluative connotations and the distribution of emphasis, providing insight into the narrative strategies employed in different types of media.

Thus, summarizing the findings, we can say that the representation of the special military operation by official media is carried out generally by using neutrally colored lexical units. Officially accepted phrases are often used to name the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, and the linguapragmatic goal of media texts consists of describing the causes and consequences of conflicts. The low-frequency use of evaluative vocabulary reflects the lack of changes in the evaluative representation of Russia's image in the Chinese official media. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict is often presented to the audience as a "result of aggressive US foreign policy," a consequence of "historical contradictions," which creates opportunities for actively promoting the peacekeeping nature of Chinese diplomacy.

Social media have a broader range in forming the audience's assessment of Russia in the context of the special military operation discription. The analysis of the linguapragmatic characteristics of media texts in Chinese blogs showed that the majority of authors consider the initiation of hostilities as "erroneous and unjustified," sometimes directly indicating signs of "aggression and annexation." The texts often use negatively colored vocabulary and metaphors to name the conflict and characterise military actions negatively.

At the same time, the historical context is actively described, the relatedness of socio-political systems and national-ethnic characteristics is examined in detail, and the President of Russia is positively evaluated, appearing as a strong and decisive leader who dared to "challenge the global hegemon." Thus, we believe that non-institutional media, while more explicitly forming a negative image of Russia as a participant in the military conflict, still leave room for the development of one's own opinion.

NOTES

[2] Further, the article provides examples from media sources in Chinese translation, which are supplemented by explanations in the form of a translation made by the authors of this article.

Table 5. **Main linguapragmatic characteristics of the special military operation's representation**

Linguapragmatic characteristics	Official Media	Social Media
The essence of the conflict	Neutral; result of geopolitical games, Cold War mentality	Predominantly negative; aggression from Russia; response to NATO's eastward expansion
US participation	Negative, USA as a global hegemon inciting wars	Neutral, USA as one of the conflict participants
Reasons	Political, economic	Historical, economic
Emphasis	Geopolitical context, economic consequences	Causes of the conflict, military aspect
Putin	Neutral	Positive
Zelensky	Neutral	Negative

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